

BEGINNER MARATHON TRAINING PLAN

A beginner's guide to running a marathon
in 20 weeks



RUNNING A MARATHON IS NO SMALL FEAT.

BUT WE'RE HERE TO HELP.

In this beginner's training programme, you'll find tips, tricks, and a 20 week running plan to get you marathon ready.

We combine speed, endurance, and recovery runs with mobility and strength training to give you the best chance at smashing your goals and Find Your Victory.

Remember to consult your doctor before starting any new workout programme, including this training plan. This plan is meant to be used as a guide, if you have any injuries, illnesses or concerns about your health before or during training, seek medical advice.



YOUR COACH

Ian Scarrott




This plan has been written by Ian Scarrott, qualified England Athletics Running Coach and PureGym Personal Trainer.

Ian has over 20 years' experience in running at club level, and over 10 years' experience in run coaching, and is now the owner of Your Run Coach.

"Taking on longer distances like the half and full marathon can seem like a mountain to climb, but know this, all things are definitely possible.

Be prepared to take responsibility for your own training, and put in the consistent work required. If you can hit at least 80% of the runs in the plan, I would say you've given yourself the best chance to be successful whatever that means for you. Whether it's to finish your first race, or hit a personal best.

Outside of this it's quite simple, to Find Your Victory, get enough sleep, eat healthily, maintain hydration levels, be kind to yourself, and above all remember it is simply 'just a race' so relax and above all enjoy the process."

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MARATHON TRAINING TOP TIPS

1 ENJOY THE PROCESS

Running a marathon is 20 weeks of training, for 1 day of victory. That means the race is less than 1% of the total time spent! Training for a marathon is challenging, but make sure to take the time to enjoy the process and the progress you make in this journey.

2 PRIORITISE REST

Rest is your number 1 priority through these 20 weeks. Training for a marathon places a huge demand on your body, and rest is essential for your body to repair itself and get stronger. Aim for 7-8 hours sleep every night, and keep your bed and waking times the same where possible.

3 IT'S OKAY TO MISS A RUN

Running is one part of your everyday life. There may be times during your training when other aspects of your life need to take priority, and that's okay. Take a break and move on to the next session when you can. If you miss more than one week or two, you may need to adapt your plan to hit your goal within the 20 weeks.

4 OPTIMISE YOUR DIET

A healthy diet can maximise your physical performance. Make sure you get enough calories and carbohydrates to fuel your training, protein to help repair and recover, and vitamins and minerals to support your overall health.

5 ADAPTATION IS KEY

This plan is designed to get you marathon ready in 20 weeks, but it can be adapted to suit your current running level. You may want to modify the plan to be completed in less time, or do it over a longer period.



MARATHON TRAINING REQUIRES A MIX OF VOLUME AND INTENSITY

When training for a marathon, there are two components which must be progressed to help you run faster and strong:

VOLUME

The number of miles you do on a given day, week, month and even over the whole training plan. It's important to increase volume at a rate which does not cause injury.

INTENSITY

How hard a session is likely to be on the muscles. Speedwork, tempo sessions, short slow runs, and long slow runs all affect the muscles differently, and may have different recovery times. Take note which types of runs you need more recovery from and use this to adapt your plan if needed.

It is important to remember that if the volume is too high for you, or the intensity is too much then you may need to tweak the plan yourself as you go.



RUNNING TERMS / RUNNING GLOSSARY

WARM UP

Warming up before a run is extremely important. It allows your muscles, tendons, and joints to become more pliable and ready for exercise. This helps to improve performance and prevent injuries.

COOL DOWN

It's tempting after a run to sit down and relax, but cooling down properly helps your muscles, tendons, and joints helps to prevent injuries by allowing the muscles to be stretched. It also helps to slowly lower your heart rate post workout, which can prevent you from experiencing dizziness.

BUILD

In faster sessions, you will normally build the pace before you complete the main set. The idea behind this is to elevate the heart rate, and prepare the muscles for faster or more intense efforts. Ideally you will be doing this gradually over the time period/ mileage allocated.

MAIN SET

This is the main portion of the session which follows the warm up and build portion of the run.

FARTLEK

Fartlek means 'speedplay' in Swedish and is a session that is used to quite literally play with different speeds to stimulate different energy systems: aerobic, lactate, and creatine.

HILLS

Hills help you to work on your form and build strength. Reduce your stride length but try and keep up the same intensity as you had on flat ground. When you run down hills, lean into it to maintain your reduced stride length.

INTERVALS

Intervals are similar to fartleks. The main difference is intervals have more structured sessions, for example 4 x 1•mile repeats/ repetitions with 2 minutes break where the speed in each repetition may stay the same. It depends on the types of intervals session included.

PROGRESSION RUN

This is where you progressively build the pace through a run to tire the body out. This prepares you to deal with the final miles in the marathon, where your body is extremely fatigued. They often say the last 10k is the real second half of the race.

S&C

S&C stands for strength and conditioning, an area of training which is often neglected until it's too late. St&C helps to improve endurance and speed, and protect your muscles, joints, and tendons against injuries. We cover this later in the guide.

RPE

Rate of Perceived Exertion. We cover this later in the guide.



STRETCHES

Stretching helps your muscles to prepare for, and recover from, running. There are two types of stretches:

DYNAMIC

Dynamic stretches involve moving your muscles and joints through their full range of motion to create a stretch. Incorporating dynamic stretches after warm up and build sets helps to loosen tight muscles and prepare your body for harder efforts.

Common areas of tightness and appropriate stretches that you might want to focus on are:

- Adductors – side to side leg swings
- Quads and hamstrings – forward to back leg swings, hamstring sweeps
- Hip flexors – lunges combined with a rocking forward and back motion in the hips
- Lower back – child's pose walkouts, walk backs

STATIC

Static stretches involve holding your muscles in a stretch for a period of time, and can help to reduce and prevent muscle stiffness. These stretches must only be done at the end of a workout when the muscles are warm and pliable.

After a workout, start at the bottom of your body and work your way up to the top to make sure no muscles get missed:

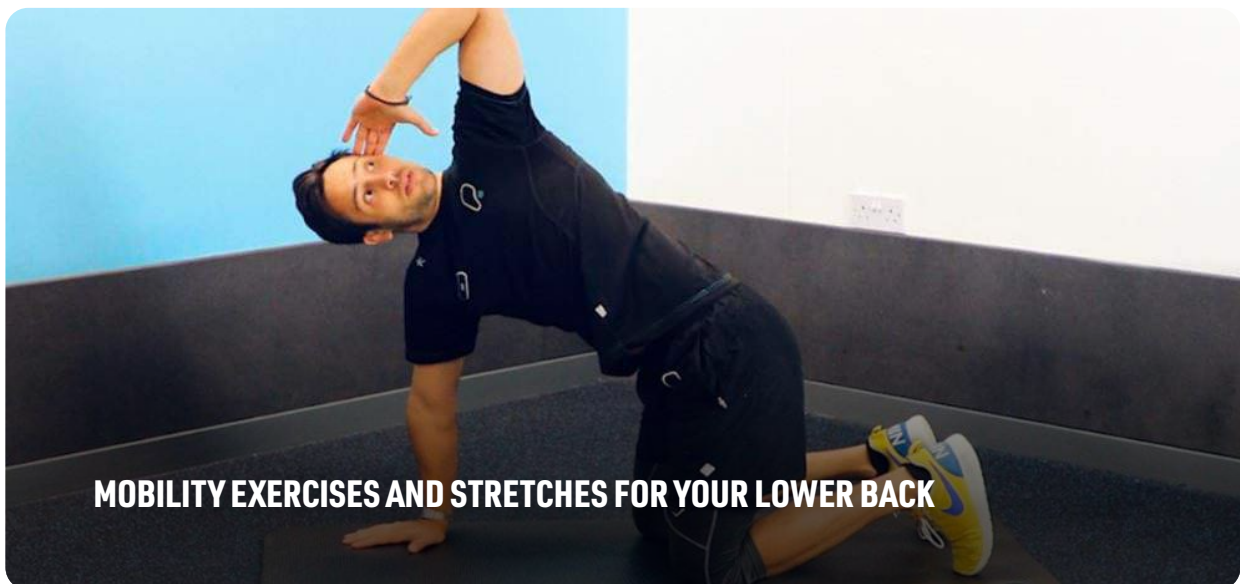
- Calves
- Quads
- Hamstrings
- Hip flexors
- Adductors
- Glutes
- Lower back
- Upper back

Check out the [PureGym blog](#) and social channels for static stretching ideas.

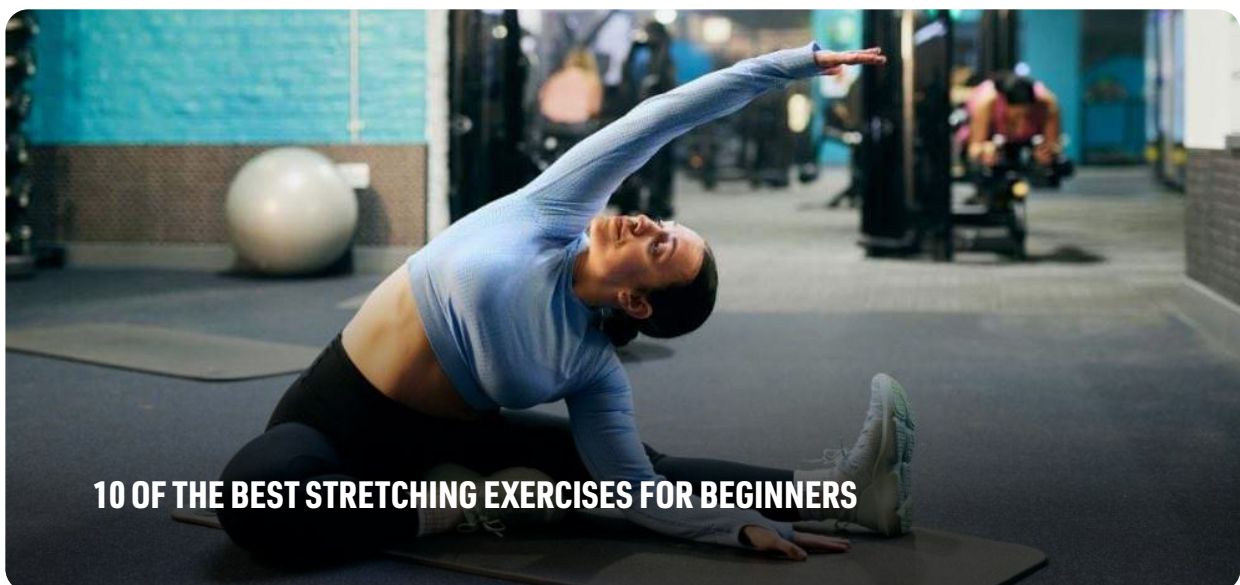




6 OF THE BEST STRETCHES FOR TIGHT HAMSTRINGS



MOBILITY EXERCISES AND STRETCHES FOR YOUR LOWER BACK



10 OF THE BEST STRETCHING EXERCISES FOR BEGINNERS



RPE

Your training plan includes target RPEs (Rate of Perceived Exhaustion) to aim for in each run.

EASY - 3/10 EFFORT

At this level, you should be able to carry out a conversation the whole time you are running.

STEADY - 5/10 EFFORT

You're able to speak comfortable but will feel a slight pinch on the lunge and legs. This may also be a beginner's marathon pace.

MARATHON PACE - 6/10

You're able to speak in sentences but not carry out a full conversation. After running for a long period of time at this level, you'll feel a significant pinch on the legs and lungs but are able to continue.

TEMPO - 7/10 EFFORT

You're able to say the odd word here and there while running at this level. These runs teach you how to be uncomfortable and stay in this place without giving up. For experienced runners, this is likely to be your half marathon pace.

HARD - 8/10 EFFORT

At this level, it's unlikely you're able to speak and your run will feel uncomfortable. This is likely around or just below your 5km pace.



S&C

Strength and conditioning are an important part of a marathon training plan as it helps to increase muscle strength and endurance which can help with performance, as well as prevent injuries.

However, you need to be careful not to overdo this, as you'll already be placing your body under a significant amount of stress through the running element of your programme.

As you increase your mileage, you'll want to taper down your strength and conditioning. If you are following this marathon guide for the full 20 weeks, drop to bodyweight exercises or lower weights and higher reps from week 10 onwards, depending on your fitness levels.

We've included 4 sample strength sessions to follow, or you can access workouts on the free PureGym App. Depending on your level of confidence and experience, you may find it helpful to work with a Personal Trainer.

Many PureGym group fitness classes also offer S&C training, including:

- Body Pump – full body strength workout
- Legs, Bums, & Tums – lower body strength workout
- Strength 30/45 – functional strength workout
- Abs – core stability



SAMPLE S&C PROGRAMME

Schedule

WEEKS 1-4

For experienced runners/ lifters:
3-4 strength sessions a week (max 1 hour)
For new runners/ lifters: lower body strength
workout (40 mins) + 10 mins core exercises

WEEKS 5-9

2-3 strength sessions a week
Effort level: 5-7/10

WEEKS 10-14

Transition to bodyweight exercises or lower
weights and higher reps depending on your
fitness level

WEEK 15-20

Drop strength sessions and focus on running,
recovery, and stretches

Core

CORE SESSION 1

Perform 3 sets of 30 seconds for each exercise,
with 30 seconds recovery between each set.

- Crunch
- Reverse Crunch
- Dead Bugs
- Russian Twists
- Ankle Taps

CORE SESSION 2

This is a circuit style session. Perform each
exercise for 15 seconds, taking a 15 second rest
before moving to the next exercise. Repeat for
5-15 minutes.

- Plank
- Side Plank Left
- Side Plank Right
- Pendulums
- Standing Oblique Crunch



Lower Body

CARDIO WARM UP

Stationary bike

- 5 minutes at 3/10 effort
- 3 minutes build through 5-7/10 effort
- 2 minutes at 3/10 effort

ACTIVATION

Perform 3 sets x 12, at effort level 5-6/10

- Glute Bridges
- Side Clams

STRENGTH

Perform 3 sets x 12 with 60 second rest, effort level 5-7/10

- Leg Press
- Leg Extensions
- Prone Hamstring Curl
- Hip Adductor
- Hip Abductor
- Calf Raises, effort level 6
- Soleus Raises

COOL DOWN

- 5 minutes easy cycle (effort level 3/10)

Upper Body

CARDIO WARM UP

cross trainer

- 5 minutes at 3/10 effort
- 3 minutes build through 5-7/10 effort
- 2 minutes at 3/10 effort

ACTIVATION

- Scapula pinches
- Shoulder rolls & swings

STRENGTH

Perform 3 sets x 12 with 60 second rest, effort level 6/10

- Face Pulls
- Lat Pull Downs
- Chest Press
- Back Extensions with or without Plate (not FRM)
- Reverse Flys Pec-Dec
- Bicep Curls
- Tricep Extensions



FINDING YOUR PACE

If you're aiming to run the marathon under a certain time, you'll need to know what pace to run. There are plenty of pace charts available online to help with this. We like [Strava's pace calculator](#) which estimates your finish time based on your ideal pace.

It's unlikely that your 6/10 effort marathon pace at the beginning of the training plan will be the same as your target marathon pace. As you progress through the training plan and build your endurance and speed, your 6/10 effort pace will increase.

TRACKING YOUR RUNS

There are plenty of apps and smart devices that can be used to plan and track your runs. We've included a few to check out below, but there are lots of options to choose from!

- SportsTracks
- Map My Run
- Runkeeper
- Garmin Connect
- RUN interval

 **Strava pace calculator**



TRAINING FAQs

I am so tired and/or everything aches, should I keep going?

There may be times during your training where you need extra recovery, and experiencing constant aches or fatigue is a good sign that an extra rest day or two is due!

You may want to consider adjusting your training plan, for example by reducing the volume each week and extending the number of weeks you train for.

Another area to look at that might be contributing to fatigue is work, family, friendships, etc. While we don't suggest cutting these things out, you may want to consider how best to balance these with your training leading up to the marathon.

Why does my pace change sometimes for the same type of runs, i.e. sometimes I feel good in a speedwork or tempo session and hit the required RPE, but sometimes I just can't get going, and the pace is never exactly correct?

It can be frustrating when you're unable to achieve the pace you are aiming for, especially if you've had no trouble achieve it previously! This is really common, and it happens quite simply because you are human!

So many things affect the pace you achieve and how you feel in a session. Hydration, hormones, recovery levels, sleep, nutrition, the weather, and more, all affect your pace.

This is one of the reasons I prefer to use RPE over heart rate and pace, as it reflects these factors. Heart rate and pace are good metrics to keep an eye on, especially if you're an experienced runner, but focusing on RPE allows you to do the best you can, with what you have in that moment.

I've missed a week due to XYZ, should I just move on to the next week?

There isn't a definite yes or no answer to this question. Some runners will be able to move on to the next week without overexerting themselves and risking injury, while other runners may find the leap too much. Only you are really equipped to make this judgement call!



I've missed a session. Should I make sure to include it before the week is over?

Whether you can shoehorn a missed session into the end of the week depends on a few factors, including level of experience and whether doing so would mean you are running multiple sessions without a rest.

If you're not sure, it's better to play it safe and miss out a session, than try and cram it in, overdo it, and get injured.

I have a niggle in my (muscle/ tendon/ joint), should I carry on training?

Pain is your body's warning sign that something isn't quite right. If you experience a sharp pain that comes on quickly, stop right away and see a physiotherapist or medical professional who can identify what the issue is, and what attention it needs.

If your pain is gradual that comes on slowly, it's most likely due to a muscle imbalance or over-training, or it might be the start of a more serious injury. Often, these issues can be addressed quickly, and you can continue with training, but it's best to pause and see a physiotherapist for an assessment to make sure there is nothing more sinister going on.

My motivation comes and goes. How can I stay on track?

Staying motivated for a marathon is difficult, especially when training over a long period of time. Fortunately, there are so many ways to keep motivated – which means there's likely something to help you!

Joining a local running club, connecting with online running communities on channels like Strava and Facebook, and recruiting your friends and family to keep you accountable, might be the nudge you need to stay strong.

You can also hire a coach like myself to keep you motivated. Coaches have the technical knowledge to help you adjust your programme, and the experience and passion to know when you need a nudge getting off the sofa.

What should I eat before, during, and after long runs and races?

This will vary per person. Some people find they don't need to eat on runs under a certain distance, some people are happy eating anything while others stick to specific pre-run meals. Experiment early on to see what works for you!



BEFORE A LONG RUN

A good rule of thumb is to eat at least 2 hours before a longer run, avoid foods which are high in fat, protein and fibre, and avoid anything that might upset your stomach. Examples of pre-run meals to try include:

- Oats, banana, honey
- Toast, peanut butter, berries
- Bagel, hummus
- Low fat yoghurt, banana

DURING A LONG RUN

During long runs, you should aim to get 30-60g carbs per hour. The easiest and most gastric-friendly way to do this is by having 2-3 running gels per hour. There are many different brands and you may find you get on better with some than others. Use the first few weeks to trial different options and find which works best for you ahead of race day.

AFTER A LONG RUN

Refuel and recover from your runs by getting a meal which incorporates carbs and protein (at a 3:1 ratio) within 20 minutes of each run. You can then eat the rest of your meals that day as normal, ensuring you get enough carbs, protein, fats, fruit and vegetables to support normal body functioning and recovery.



20 WEEK MARATHON TRAINING PLAN

WEEK 1

TOTAL MILES: 8-MILES

Coach notes: The purpose of this week is to start building your aerobic base. Stick to easy runs rather than overdoing it!

- Session 1: 2-mile easy run
- Session 2: 2-mile easy/ steady run
- Session 3: 4-mile longer easy run

WEEK 2

TOTAL MILES: 10-MILES

Coach notes: This week sees a very gradual increase in miles, and the addition of some speedwork. Listen to your body carefully – if you want to change faster runs into easy or recovery runs, do so.

- Session 1: 2-mile easy run
- Session 2: 3-mile Fartlek
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build and main set: 1-mile, varying the speed between easy/ steady/ tempo (and walk if required)
 - Cool down: 1-mile easy run
- Session 3: 5-mile longer easy run



WEEK 3

TOTAL MILES: 13-MILES

Coach notes: Feel free to adjust the mileage of each session slightly depending on how you feel during the run, and after.

- Session 1: 3-mile easy run
- Session 2: 3 – 4-mile intervals
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build: 0.5-mile, building through easy/ steady/ tempo
 - Main: 3 x 1 minute reps (1 minute tempo, 1 minute recovery) followed by 3 x 1 minute reps (1 minute hard, 1 minute recovery)
 - Cool down: Remainder of the distance at easy
- Session 3: 6-7-mile longer easy run

WEEK 4

TOTAL MILES: 14-MILES

Coach notes: This is the last week of pre-marathon training before the 20-week plan begins, so there's a focus on speedwork as well as an increase in volume.

- Session 1: 3-mile easy run
- Session 2: 4-mile progressive run
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build and main: Build the pace over the first 2-miles, increasing every half mile
 - Cool down: 1 – 2-mile easy
- Session 3: 7-mile longer easy run

WEEK 5

TOTAL MILES: 16-MILES

Coach notes: Practice pacing yourself in your training sessions and give yourself enough time to recover between sessions – no back-to-back running days where avoidable!

- Session 1: 4-mile easy run
- Session 2: 4-mile hills
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build: 0.5-mile, build the pace through easy/ steady/ tempo
 - Main set: 6 x 30 sec hill tempo runs, following by 6 x 30 sec hill hard runs (walk or jog down hills for recovery between sets)
 - Cool down: easy run for remainder of distance
- Session 3: 8-mile-long easy run



WEEK 6

TOTAL MILES: 18-MILES

Coach notes: This is where the longer runs start to ramp up. If you struggle with having enough time for long runs due to lifestyle commitments, you can split them into two shorter runs (e.g. splitting 10 miles into 7-miles and 3-miles).

- Session 1: 4-mile easy run
- Session 2: 4-mile Fartlek
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build and main set: 2-miles, varying the speed between steady/ tempo/ hard (and walk if needed)
 - Cool down: 1-mile easy run
- Session 3: 10-mile-long easy run

WEEK 7

TOTAL MILES: 14.2-MILES

Coach notes: This week, we're dropping the volume of training while maintaining the intensity.

- Session 1: 4-mile easy run
- Session 2: 4-mile intervals
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build: 1-mile, building the pace through easy/ steady/ tempo
 - Main set: Ascending pyramid, 1 minute tempo run with 90 sec recovery, 90 second tempo run with 90 second recovery, 2 x 2 minute hard run with 90 sec recovery
 - Cool down: easy run for remaining distance
- Session 3: 6.2-miles



WEEK 8

TOTAL MILES: 21-MILES

Coach notes: This week, we are starting to build up your mileage. If you haven't already, it's time to think about practicing your nutrition for race day. Try different brands of gel, and trial taking one every 20-30 minutes during long runs. You'll soon find what works for you and what doesn't.

- Session 1: 4-mile easy run
- Session 2: 5-mile progressive run
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build and main set: Build the pace for 2 – 3-miles, increasing every 0.5-miles
 - Cool down: 1 – 2-mile easy run
- Session 3: 12-mile-long easy run
 - Easy 6-mile run
 - Build to marathon pace for 1-mile
 - Hold marathon pace for 3-mile
 - Easy 2-mile

WEEK 9

TOTAL MILES: 23-MILES

Coach notes: This week features hill runs. Running downhill is tough on the joints, so if you are unable to run downhill due to a previous injury, find a longer hill where you can run uphill, or switch to 30 second uphill repeats and increase the number of reps.

- Session 1: 4-mile easy run
- Session 2: 5-mile hill run
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build: 1-mile building the pace through easy/ steady/ tempo
 - Main set: 6 x 60 second tempo hill runs with downhill tempo run recovery, followed by 6 x 60 second hard hill runs with downhill hard recovery
 - Cool down: 1-mile easy run
- Session 3: 14-mile-long easy run
 - Easy 6-mile run
 - Build to marathon pace for 1-mile
 - Hold marathon pace for 4-mile
 - Easy 3-mile



WEEK 10

TOTAL MILES: 17.2-MILES

Coach notes: This week we're dropping the volume while maintaining the intensity. Use this time to rest and recover.

- Session 1: 3-mile easy run
- Session 2: 5-mile intervals
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Main: pyramids
 - 2mins hard effort/
2mins recovery
 - 3mins tempo effort/
2 mins recovery
 - 5mins steady effort/
2 mins recovery
 - 5mins steady effort/
2 mins recovery
 - 3mins tempo effort/
2 mins recovery
 - 2mins hard effort/
2mins recovery
 - Cool down: easy run for remainder of distance
- Session 3: 8 – 9-mile-long easy run
 - Easy 1-mile run
 - Build to 10k pace for 1-mile
 - 10km at race pace
 - Easy run for remainder of the distance

WEEK 11

TOTAL MILES: 25-MILES

Coach notes: Remember to adjust the plan if you need to, ensuring you are progressing but not pushing too hard. Allowing for adequate recovery and avoiding injury is more important than sticking to the plan meticulously.

- Session 1: 4-mile easy run
- Session 2: 4-mile intervals
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build: 1-mile building through easy/
stead/ tempo/ hard
 - Main: 3 x 400m hard/ 200m jog
recovery followed by 800m hard/
400m jog recovery
 - Cool down: easy run for remainder of distance
- Session 3: 16-mile progressive run
 - Easy 5-mile run
 - 6/10 effort run for 3-mile
 - 7/10 effort run for 2-mile
 - Easy 6-mile run



WEEK 12

TOTAL MILES: 27-MILES

Coach notes: This week is all about building your speed endurance so you can hold a faster pace for longer.

- Session 1: 3-mile easy run
- Session 2: 6-mile interval run
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build: 1-mile building the pace gradually through easy/ steady/ tempo
 - Main: 3 x 800m tempo/ 800m steady reps
 - Cool down: 1-mile easy run
- Session 3: 18-mile progressive run
 - Easy 6-mile run
 - 6/10 effort for 4-mile
 - 7/10 effort for 2-mile
 - Easy 6-mile run

WEEK 13

TOTAL MILES: 22-MILES

Coach notes: This week, include a half marathon run at half marathon pace in your longer run. This will help to prepare you for any pre nerve jitters you might experience on race day as well as check if your pre- and during race fuel works for you. Leave around 25-27 hours between session 2 and session 3.

- Session 1: 5-mile Fartlek run
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build and main: 3-mile, varying the speed between steady/ tempo/ hard
- Session 2: 2-mile pre-race day easy run with strides
 - Warm up: 1-mile jog
 - Main: build the pace to easy run, running faster for 10 strides every $\frac{1}{4}$ mile to stretch the legs out
- Session 3: 15-mile-long run including half marathon
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build: 0.5-mile build to half marathon pace
 - Main: half marathon
 - Cool down: 0.5-mile easy run



WEEK 14

TOTAL MILES: 29-MILES

Coach notes: This week's long run is likely to be tough! We're getting close to the finishing line so stay focused and push through.

- Session 1: 3-mile easy run
- Session 2: 6-mile tempo run
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build: 1-mile, building the pace through easy/ steady/ tempo/ hard
 - Main: 3-mile tempo run
 - Cool down: 1-mile easy run
- Session 3: 20-mile easy long run

WEEK 15

TOTAL MILES: 30 MILES

Coach notes: The longer run this week is a chance to practice your marathon pace for a longer period of time – good luck!

- Session 1: 3-mile easy run
- Session 2: 7-mile tempo run
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build: 1-mile building the pace through easy/ steady/ tempo/ hard]
 - Main: 4-mile tempo run
 - Cool down: 1-mile easy run
- Session 2: 20-mile-long run including marathon pace
 - 8-mile easy run
 - 1-mile build to marathon pace
 - 5-mile at marathon pace
 - 6-mile easy run

WEEK 16

TOTAL MILES: 20 MILES

Coach notes: This week we're dropping the volume to aid recovery, while maintaining the intensity.

- Session 1: 3-mile easy run
- Session 2: 7-mile Fartlek run
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build: 1-mile building the pace through easy/ steady/ tempo/ hard
 - Main: 5-mile Fartlek
 - Cool down: 1-mile easy run
- Session 3: 10-mile inception run
 - 3 sets of: 1-mile easy, 1-mile steady, 1-mile tempo, 1-mile hard



WEEK 17

TOTAL MILES: 29-MILES

Coach notes: These last few weeks, we are tapering down long runs and overall volume gradually. This will help with recovery ahead of the marathon without losing the fitness you've gained.

- Session 1: 3-mile easy run
- Session 2: 8-mile tempo run
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build: 1-mile building the pace through easy/ steady/ tempo/ hard
 - Main: 5-mile tempo run
 - Cool down: 1-mile easy run
- Session 3: 18-mile easy progressive run
 - 6-mile easy run
 - 1-mile build to marathon pace
 - 6-mile run at 6/10 effort
 - 3-mile run at 7/10 effort
 - 2-mile easy run

WEEK 18

TOTAL MILES: 25-MILES

Coach notes: We've switched around your sessions so that session 2 is run the day before your long run. If possible, include a parkrun as part of your long run to get that race day feel.

- Session 1: 9-mile intervals
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build: 1-mile building the pace through easy/ steady/ tempo/ hard
 - Main: 6 sets of 1-mile tempo run with 2 minutes recovery
 - Cool down: 1-mile easy run
- Session 2: 2-mile pre-race day practice
- Session 3: 14-mile-long run
 - 6-mile easy run
 - 1-mile build to marathon pace
 - 6-mile run at 6/10 effort (including parkrun)
 - 1-mile easy run



WEEK 19

TOTAL MILES: 15-MILES

Coach notes: One week left to go! Now is the time to ease off and recover ahead of race day. Stick to routes you know and maintain discipline with pacing.

- Session 1: 5-mile Fartlek
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build: 1-mile building the pace through easy/ steady/ tempo/ hard
 - Main: 3-mile Fartlek
 - Cool down: 1-mile easy run
- Session 2: 2-mile pre-race day practice
- Session 3: 8-mile-long easy run

WEEK 20

TOTAL MILES: 31.2-MILES

Coach notes: Race week is upon us! Start your easy run (session 2) 24 hours before your marathon start time, include some longer strides to stretch out your legs, and make sure you stretch after. Dynamic stretching before the marathon can help if you've been doing them throughout the programme, but don't try anything new or vigorous.

By now, you should know what to eat the night before to avoid gastric distress – stick to what you know, stay hydrated, and get a good night's sleep! Use the week to plan yourself for any possibilities, and make sure you have everything you need for race day prepped ahead of time. If you struggle with pre-race day nerves, box breathing is a useful tool for calming down. Breathe in for the count of 4, hold your breathe for the count of 4, breathe out for 4, hold for 4, and repeat.

- Rest days: Monday, Wednesday, Friday
- Session 1: 3-mile Fartlek run
 - Warm up: 1-mile easy run
 - Build and main: 1-mile building through easy/ steady/ tempo
 - Cool down: 1-mile easy run
- Session 2: 1 – 2-mile pre-race day easy run
- Session 3: Marathon
 - Pace progressively
 - Enjoy!

